

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-12 and 14-20 are pending in the application and stand rejected as anticipated by or obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,289,342 issued to Spalding. Applicants respectfully traverse and submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal by the Examiner of the rejections and issuance of a notice of allowance without further delay.

Applicants have amended the title as requested by the Examiner.

Applicants object to the imposition of a final rejection under newly-cited art and request that the Examiner, as a minimum, remove the application from final.

Spalding discloses an expansion board 121 having a signal connector 119 that connects to a bezel 26 with screws 120, and a housing 10 that encloses the expansion board.

Claim 1 recites, in part, "a protective housing coupled to the printed circuit board proximate to and separate from the board signal connector and the cable connector, the protective housing having an opening aligned to allow coupling of the cable and board signal connector, the opening having walls disposed proximate the signal connectors to absorb force applied at the signal connectors".

Claim 8 recites, in part, "supporting the mating connector outer surface with the inner surface of the protective housing opening".

Claim 15 recites, in part, "a housing separate from the Serial ATA connector and having openings on opposing sides, the openings sized to accept the Serial ATA connector from one side and a separate Serial ATA mated cable connector from the opposing side".

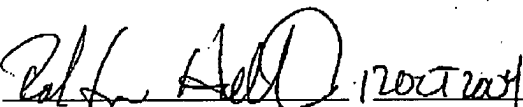
Spalding cannot anticipate or make obvious Claims 1, 8 and 15 because Spalding fails to teach, disclose or suggest all elements recited by Claims 1, 8 and 15. For instance, Spalding fails to teach, disclose or suggest a housing separate from signal and cable connectors that supports or absorbs force at the signal and cable connectors. Applicants respectfully direct the Examiner's attention to Figure 8 of Spalding, which depicts housing 10 distal from signal connector 119.

Applicants respectfully submit that the opening of housing 10 cannot support or absorb force from a connector 119 as recited by Applicants' claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Spalding cannot anticipate or make obvious Claims 1, 8 or 15, and request withdrawal of the rejections to Claims 1-12 and 14-20.

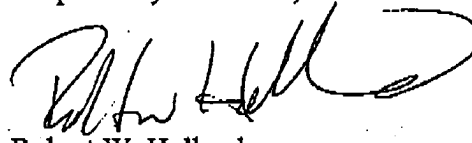
**CONCLUSION**

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account 502264.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being sent to the USPTO via Facsimile on this the 12 <sup>th</sup> day of October 2004.	
	12 OCT 2004
Attorney for Applicant(s)	Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,

  
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